

Appl. No. 10/632,082
Amdt. dated May 6, 2005
Reply to Office action of Feb. 9, 2005

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated February 9, 2005, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the above claim amendment and the following remarks. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 5 and 11 have been amended, and new claims 29-35 have been added, leaving claims 1-13 and 29-35 for consideration upon entry of the present amendment. No new matter has been added by the amendment.

Claim Objections

Claims 5 and 8 were objected to for informality. Claim 5 has been amended to correct the misspelling of "first" and to elucidate that the first conductive pattern and the first electrode are soldered "with each other." Regarding claim 8, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 8 clearly indicates that the second conductive pattern is "electrically connected" to the second electrode. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objections to claims 5 and 8.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-3, 5-8 and 11-13

Claims 1-3, 5-8 and 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Correll, Jr. et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,720,546 (hereinafter "Correll").

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. V. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). It is respectfully submitted that Correll fails to teach each and every element as set forth in claim 1 for at least the reasons described below.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite, *inter alia*, a first board having a flat plate shape and being coupled to a first electrode to provide the first electrode with a first discharge voltage. In other words, the claimed invention includes a first board connected to an electrode receiving a discharge voltage, and the first board has a flat plate shape.

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The Examiner stated in the rejection of claim 1 that element (3) of Figure 3 in Correll corresponds to the first board of the present invention. It is respectfully submitted that element (3) does not have a flat shape, but has numerous bent portions. It is submitted that element (3) of Correll does not teach a board of a flat plate shape connected to an electrode. Thus, Correll fails to teach a first board having a flat plate shape and being coupled to the first electrode to provide the first electrode with the first discharge voltage, as claimed in amended claim 1.

Accordingly, claim 1 is believed to be patentably distinct and nonobvious in view of Correll. Claims 2, 3, 5-8 and 11-13 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, thus include all the limitations of claim 1. Thus, claims 2, 3, 5-8 and 11-13 are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons given for claim 1, which is believed to be allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the rejections of claims 1-3, 5-8 and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

In order for an obviousness rejection to be proper, the Examiner must meet the burden of establishing that all elements of the invention are disclosed in the prior art; that the prior art relied upon, coupled with knowledge generally available in the art at the time of the invention, must contain some suggestion or incentive that would have motivated the skilled artisan to modify a reference or combined references; and that the proposed modification of the prior art must have had a reasonable expectation of success, determined from the vantage point of the skilled artisan at the time the invention was made. *In re Fine*, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988); *In re Wilson*, 165 U.S.P.Q. 494, 496 (C.C.P.A. 1970); *Amgen v. Chugai Pharmaceuticals Co.*, 927 U.S.P.Q.2d, 1016, 1023 (Fed. Cir. 1996). See MPEP 2143.

Claims 4 and 10

Claims 4 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Correll in view of Park, U.S. Patent No. 6,050,704.

As mentioned above, Correll fails to teach a first board having a flat plate shape and being coupled to a first electrode to provide the first electrode with a first discharge voltage, as claimed in amended claim 1. Park is directed to fluorescent lamps for a backlight that are powered by an

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inverter. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Park of a first board having a flat plate shape and being coupled to a first electrode to provide the first electrode with a first discharge voltage, as claimed in amended claim 1. Thus the cited references do not render claim 1 obvious. Claims 4 and 10 depend indirectly from claim 1, thus include all the limitations of claim 1. The dependent claims 4 and 10 are patentable for at least the same reasons as given above for the independent claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejections of claims 4 and 10.

Claim 9

Claim 9 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Correll.

As mentioned above, Correll fails to teach a first board having a flat plate shape and being coupled to a first electrode to provide the first electrode with a first discharge voltage, as claimed in amended claim 1. Thus Correll does not render claim 1 obvious. Claim 9 depends indirectly from claim 1, thus includes all the limitations of claim 1. The dependent claim 9 is patentable for at least the same reasons as given above for the independent claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection of claim 9.

Newly Added Claims

Applicants have added new claims 29-35 to more particularly define aspects of the present invention. The new claims include no new matter and are fully supported by the specification and the drawings of the present application. Claims 30-34 depend from independent claim 29, which is believed to be allowable, thus claims 30-34 are believed to be allowable due to their dependency on claim 29. Claim 35 depends from claim 1, and is allowable for at least the reasons given above for claim 1. Additionally, claim 35 is believed to be allowable for the reasons set forth below.

Claim 35 recites, *inter alia*, the first board is disposed such that a planar surface of the first board is substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of each of the lamps. It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references teach a board disposed perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the lamps. In particular, the circuit board (9) in Figure 3 of Correll is disposed parallel to a longitudinal direction of the lamps. Thus, none of the cited referenced teach

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the first board is disposed such that a planar surface of the first board is substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of each of the lamps, as claimed in claim 35. Thus claim 35 is believed to be allowable.

Accordingly, it is believed that the new claims are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice of Allowance issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is cordially requested to telephone the undersigned.

In the event the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks deems additional fees to be due in connection with this application, Applicants' attorney hereby authorizes that such fee be charged to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

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